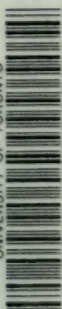


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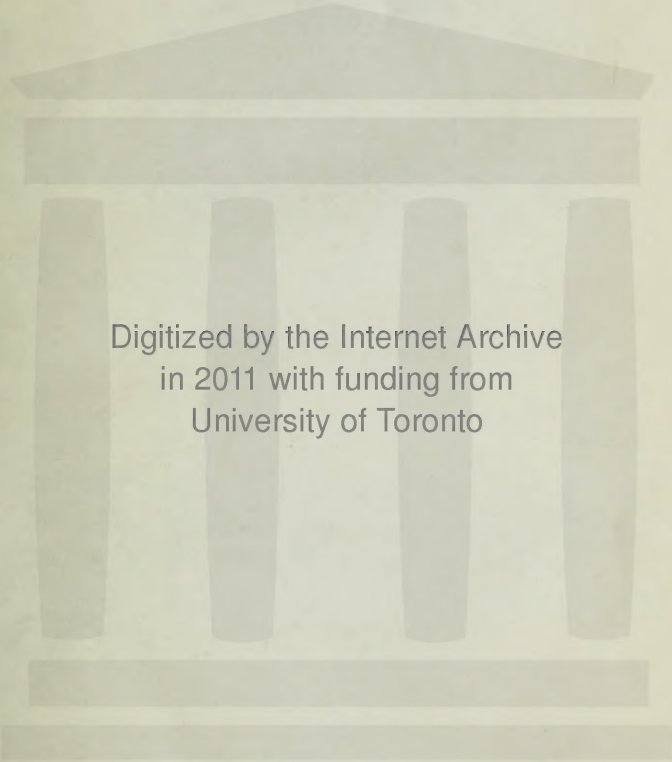
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Twisk, Pieter Janszohn  
The peaceful Kingdom of  
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P. B.

# The Peaceful Kingdom of Christ

OR

An Exposition of the 20th Chapter of the  
Book of Revelations,

BY

PETER J. TWISK.

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"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John 5:25.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. 20:5.

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Translated from the German by John F. Funk.

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Elkhart, Indiana.  
Mennonite Publishing Company.  
1913.



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### **Preface to Former German Edition.**

Beloved Reader:—The following work, an exposition of the twentieth chapter of the Revelation to the Apostle John, was written by Peter Jan Twisk, a minister of the Baptizo-minded\*) Church, who lived about the year A. D. 1600. It was written in the Holland or Dutch language, and later by a lover of the truth translated into German, and inasmuch as in our time the views concerning the Jewish kingdom are understood so differently, I have been prompted to interest myself in the matter, and believe that I am rendering an acceptable service to all who are seeking after the unadulterated truth, by re-publishing this work in the German language. May the kind reader prove all things with the word of God, retain that which is good, and give God the glory.

The first German edition that we have any knowledge of was published by Ulrich & Schultze, Odessa, Russia, in 1875.

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\*) Otherwise known in the old German writings as Baptists, Anabaptists, Re-Baptizers (Wiedertaeufer), and later as Mennonites. P. J. Twisk and his writings are frequently referred to by T. J. Van Braght in the "Martyrs Mirror."  
Translator of English Edition.



## **Preface to the English Edition.**

The translator of the first English edition of this valuable work by P. J. Twisk was prompted to the translation of this booklet on the "Kingdom of Peace" by a desire to become more fully acquainted with the subject and the arguments therein presented for the reason that he could not understand the views on this subject as they are maintained by many of our modern theologians. After the translation was completed, a brother from Oklahoma made an earnest appeal to have the little work printed and published in the English language and offered to make a very liberal contribution toward the expense. Thus it transpires that one of the active workers of the kingdom of Christ of three centuries ago, though long since dead, still speaks to us in our English language. May the Lord bless the work and may it go forth to the edifying of many souls.

THE TRANSLATOR.

Elkhart, Indiana, May 8, 1913.



## THE PEACEFUL KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Rev. 20:1-5.

Concerning this prophetic declaration a number of educated men have attempted different explanations or interpretations, but different as these interpretations have been given, many of them have not succeeded in striking the correct idea contained in these words, given us through the Spirit of divine revelation. But that this revelation or prophecy is not of human origin is a fact conceded by all, and also that of the fulfilling thereof there remains no doubt. We purpose to show from the Psalms, the Prophets and the Books of Moses, how they were to be fulfilled and how they were fulfilled.

The holy and God-fearing men, both before and after the giving of the law through Moses, hoped for a time

(and rejoiced in the expectation thereof) in which the high and inestimable happiness of the human race should be restored to them in its full measure. Concerning the exalted happiness, and the possession and enjoyment thereof, though it be only as a foretaste, Jesus speaks in plain terms, saying, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear; for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them" (Matth. 13:16, 17).

We do not think that any one will take it that herewith (from the above quoted words) is meant the simple seeing of the person of Christ in human form, that would bring to the human race such blessedness or salvation. This is plainly understood from the words of the woman who cried out and said, "Blessed is the womb which bare thee and the paps which thou hast sucked." But Jesus said, "Yea, blessed are they which hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27, 28).

The revelation of this Word of God, which was made flesh and dwelt among men—this is the glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The time of the revelation of this word of the gospel of peace—this was the acceptable time which was fulfilled by the coming of Christ in the flesh, and which was published or preached to the people for the first time after Christ had withstood the temptations of Satan. All this was fulfilled in the day when the Savior said, "Today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21). As in the prophecy of Isaiah, when he prophesied concerning the blessed conditions that would be revealed in the kingdom of God, and spake of these conditions in a figurative sense, so also, without doubt, the prophecy revealed by the Spirit to John set forth in a figurative sense the period of this gospel of peace as one thousand years.

The law had the shadow of good things to come, not the substance of the things themselves (Heb. 10), for neither by the offering nor by the blood of the offering was it possible to take away sin—and neither the royal priesthood nor the priestly service of the Levites was able to help even a single man who had fallen among thieves, though the bleeding misery of the half-dead man was plainly visible, and the matter of help was left in hope until the compassionate Samaritan appeared, declaring in decided terms, “Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O Lord,” “in which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all” (Heb. 10:7-10). This also is witnessed to us by the Holy Ghost when he says (Jer. 31:31-34), “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days: I will put my law into their inward parts and will write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” And only through this testament, which is sealed with the innocent blood of Jesus, have we the joy of entering into the holy place.

To have an entrance there, however, all men who desire this must possess a true heart and the full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled and made free from an evil conscience and their bodies washed with pure water.

It is this acceptable time in which all men who give heed to the holy calling and awake from the sleep of sin and are spiritually born anew, arise from the spiritual death and are enlightened by Christ, shall live with Christ and reign with him a thousand years. It is this glorious kingdom of Christ on earth, which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, but which cometh not with outward appearances, neither shall men say, “Lo, here! or lo, there! for the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21).

This is the kingdom which God showed to King Nebuchadnezzar, and which he had Daniel set forth more



clearly as he interpreted the dream to the king. This is the kingdom which was to be established and exist while yet the temporal kingdoms of the world existed, as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and especially also the Roman kingdom, which is represented hard as iron (Daniel 2), under the strong dominion of which also Christ, the Savior and Redeemer of the whole world, a **King of all kings**, was born.\*)

It is a matter worthy of note that we are told, "**In the days of these kings**" (or kingdoms). We may confidently believe that it was to come to pass under the fourth monarchy of the biblical history of the world; and the chronicles and church histories, as well as the histories of the world, show clearly that what Daniel finally said was true: "And the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure." This kingdom also shall never be destroyed, as were other temporal, worldly kingdoms; neither shall it ever be left to any other people, such as Babylon, Persia or Greece. Then, again, after much warring and bloodshed, the Romans conquered all these nations and brought them under their dominion. Kindly read the explanation in Daniel.

Consequently the kingdom, improperly called the Millennium, under the reign of the Roman Emperor or Roman Dominion, was established by God himself. The kingdom was established as said, but the King himself must go into a far country, in order to possess the kingdom, for he had many enemies who were not willing to bow under his dominion, and especially the strongest enemy, which he, last of all, must destroy, was death. When, however, he had conquered death and put him under his feet (1 Cor. 15:26) and thus taken away his power, he also gave gifts unto his subjects that they might reign over sin as long as

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\*) The kingdom of Christ should be established and exist while these kingdoms of the world were still in power.



they dwell in these tabernacles, and as many as believe in him shall live, though they die. Jesus further says (John 11:26), "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," and consequently these shall live with him and reign with him a thousand years, that is, forever.

Although the souls of those who were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held, sometimes (possibly often) cried with a loud voice from under the altar, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And we are told that it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren that should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled\*) (Rev. 6:10, 11).

Now since death was robbed of his power, an angel also could bind Satan and cast him into prison, as our text declares that he had a great chain in his hand; a chain made up of many sacrifices, much blood and many lives, strengthened with the obedience of Christ, yea, with his obedience unto death, by means of which the whole law was fulfilled; and through himself, that is, through Christ, the enmity was destroyed and thus also through his flesh the middle wall of partition was taken away (Heb. 2).

This great chain of the law relating to all the commandments, fulfilled and confirmed through the blood of Jesus Christ and his full and complete propitiation, was now strong enough to bind Satan and cast him into prison, and then could the angel proclaim the everlasting gospel to them that dwell upon the earth, and to all the heathen and kindred and people and tongues. For only after the death of Jesus was the testament (the new testament) established and received the power which in the law of Moses was promised unto men. For his reason also no

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\*) Should also be gathered or brought together with them.—(Translator.)

man or angel before this could invent or even think of any means by which fallen man could be redeemed, but that an acceptable time, a day of salvation, should come upon the earth before the earth should be smitten with a curse, is plainly set forth in Mal. 4:6. And this acceptable day of grace is also indicated in the law by the celebration of the Sabatical year and the year of Jubilee, in which every poor Israelite could again come into the possession of his fathers' inheritance (Lev. 25; Deut. 15).

This acceptable time was also indicated or typified by the cities of refuge, into which he who had unawares slain any one could escape the murderer's doom and be made free after the high priest, who had been anointed with the holy oil, had died. Likewise could the kingdom of peace here on earth be established only after the High Priest—the spiritual Melchizedeck, the King of Salem—had died; and now all who believe in this promise die spiritually with Christ, and are also, through his resurrection, raised up and awakened to a new and spiritual life (Rom. 6:4); and this is the first resurrection, and blessed and holy is he that hath part in it; over such the second death has no power (Rev. 20:5, 6).

No one, however, whosoever he may be, will have part in this kingdom, except those who are regenerated and born anew, for Jesus testifies with a twofold "verily," saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Concerning this glorious time of peace the holy men of God have written a great deal and desired to see it. They also testified prophetically concerning it. Now (as this time came) the threatening power of the Mosaic law was set aside, and the words of the prophet could be applied, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished; . . . prepare ye

the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made plain" (Isa. 40:1-5). "And he shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs in his arm and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:11). "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and a sucking child shall play on the hole of the ask, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain" (Isa. 11:6-9).

"Then they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up the sword against nation and they will not learn the arts of war any more" (Isa. 2; Mich. 4).

All this is fulfilled in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which is the church, from the days of the apostles on until the time when this time\*) shall be fulfilled, and there is none that more fully fulfilled this scripture than the Apostle Paul, who, like a ravenous wolf, caught and tore the lambs of Christ and took pleasure in the death of the innocent sheep of Christ. Afterwards, however, he became peaceable and prepared so that like a little child of few days (after his regeneration or spiritual resurrection) he led calves and young lions and fatlings together. In persecution he was comforted in the word of truth, in the power of God, through the weapons of righteousness, to his right

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\*) This present time, the last days; the days of the gospel dispensation, which shall end with the end of the world. Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28-31. See also other references.

and to his left (2 Cor. 6), and he testified that now is the day of salvation, the acceptable time in which God will hear us.

Paul, in the proper spiritual sense, did indeed lead calves and young lions together. Pontius Festus, the Governor of Caesarea, permitted himself to be led by Paul and concluded from the words that Paul spoke that he was innocent of the charges brought against him, and testified before King Agrippa and the entire counsel that he (Paul) had done nothing worthy of death (Acts 25). Also Felix was terrified when Paul reasoned before him of righteousness, and of temperance, and of the judgment to come. But he answered, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." But there is no record that this convenient time for Felix ever came. Agrippa the king, however, was so led of Paul through the explanatory representation of his imprisonment that he cried out and said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." But of the conversion or regeneration of these worldly lords we have no account; consequently they are not to be classed with the lambs of Christ, but with those who are without and those who are compared to lions, bears, tigers and wolves.

That all the scripture texts to which we have referred, all similar prophecies of all the prophets and the psalms, as well as all the parables of the law, must be understood spiritually and cannot be taken in a natural sense, if in any case they are to agree and harmonize one with another, even as the music of a harp of many chords in which all the chords harmonize with each other in giving glory to our great King, Priest and Prophet, all the scriptures show. For that in a natural sense every hill and every mountain shall be made low, and every valley shall be exalted, I hope no one who with half an eye reads the Bible believes; and as this one thing is not to be understood in a natural sense, so are also other prophecies and



figurative declarations of God's word not to be taken as though it would occur or come to pass in a natural sense, as Christ's own words declare, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, . . . but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Jesus did not withhold from Pilate the fact that he was a King, and that to this end he was born and came into the world to testify to the truth which should make free all them that believe it. Those, however, who do not believe on the word of truth, which is the gospel of peace—these, in deepest sorrow, ask with Pilate, "What is truth?" Yea, they do not trust the word of God, though it is sharper than a two-edged sword; with which all who have confessed and acknowledged the testimony of the truth have overcome the enemy of God.

I do not consider it necessary to produce further proof that this kingdom is intended to be a spiritual kingdom, and that all the prophetic passages pointing to it *must* also be understood and taken spiritually. The words of Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world," show this fact fully, and all who brawl against it, speak in vain (Psa. 2:1). "For he that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh at them, . . . he will speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." And he says further, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion," and this is the mountain which became great so that it filled the whole world, and this came forth from one stone which was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, of which we may read in detail in the explanation of this text (Dan. 2).

Should we take these passages and explain them literally, we would need an explanation which would exceed all the superstitions that ever existed. Consequently we cannot interpret any other scriptural passages that refer to this prophetically in any other way than spiritually. The

apostle indeed speaks of the earnest expectation of the creature waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, and says further, "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God; for we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit: the redemption of our body; for we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope" (Rom. 8:19-24).

This earnest expectation of the creature will remain even during the period of Christ's glorious kingdom of peace on earth and is to be understood as applying to the loud cries of the souls under the altar of God, which are so anxiously awaiting the revelation of Christ and the reuniting with their then glorified bodies. However, their life with Christ is hid in God (Col. 3). It can, therefore, not be distinguishable before the world, as the Savior himself said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (St. John 3:8). And though to all the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they had given from the word of God, there was given to each a white robe, which, when put on, guaranteed to all who are called to the passover of the Lamb full salvation (which those in the faith, as yet only hoped for, and the saints who were slain, expected) (Rev. 19), there remained still with them the earnest expectation and desire for the reuniting of their transformed and glorified bodies with the soul and spirit.

During this acceptable time—these thousand years—Satan should not deceive the nations. That, however, in

this time no temptations should come in the way of those who confess Christ cannot be shown by any word of scripture, but on the contrary it is said, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Matth. 26:41). Satan will indeed assail men and lead them into many temptations, but no one who continues in watching and praying to God and pleading with him, shall fall, unless, like Saul, he rejects the commandments of God, or like Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire before the Lord, or like Israel, contrary to the law, admit people of uncircumcised hearts and uncircumcised flesh into the holy place of God (Hez. 44). All similar examples were means and causes of falling into temptations.

On the other hand, those who continue in watchfulness and prayer, and highly esteem the commandments of God, in the hour of temptation that shall come over all the world, shall be preserved; as the Spirit (in Rev. 3) says, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee" (Rev. 3:10). Everywhere, however, as well under the law as also in the gospel, God promised his help and his presence on the unchangeable condition: "If ye will walk in my statutes and observe and keep my commandments and do them" (Lev. 36).

The glorious time of peace in these thousand years in which those who arose in the first resurrection shall reign with Christ, is the time in which the two witnesses shall prophesy (Rev. 11), and when the woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown with twelve stars, fled into the wilderness and remained there 1,260 days (Rev. 12). That this time shall be a time of distress, we learn from Dan. 9:25 and Rev. 11:3. Clothed in sackcloth during the time of these prophecies denotes the cross of Christ, and especially that the heathen shall trample the holy city forty-two months (1,260 days, indicating 1,260 years). That this time shall be a time of distress and a hard time is readily to be con-

cluded from the scriptures above referred to, and is also shown by the open book which John took from the hand of the angel and ate it up, and it became bitter in his belly. But he was nevertheless commanded to prophesy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings (Rev. 10:1, 11), and after this, Satan was to be loosed for a little time.

All the examples that are given us concerning the temptations with which Satan sought to tempt men, were presented to them in a friendly way. He said to Eve, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat. . . . Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

The two hundred and fifty princes, men of renown in the congregation, said, "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy" (Num. 16:3, 4). Likewise both Saul and Jeroboam thought, "Did God say?" and though they said it with good intentions, they both rejected the commandments and were misled, etc. When, however, the fullness of the gentiles shall have come in, that is, into the sheepfold of Christ, into the church of God, and also all Israel shall be saved, that is, all the spiritual Israel, that in the days of the prophecy of the witnesses of God shall be converted to God, that is, of those that remain not in unbelief (Rom. 11:33; compare with Rom. 2:28, 29), shall be saved, although they may not have been hired until the eleventh hour, they shall every one receive the penny of divine grace.

And Satan shall go out to deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle. This going forth of Satan into the wide world clearly signifies that it is the time when the witnesses of God lay dead in the streets, in which a voluptuous life offered itself to the people. Just as it was in the days of Noah and Lot, in which men did eat and drink, bought and



sold, married and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered in the ark and the flood destroyed them; and as it was in the day of Sodom, when Lot went out of the doomed city, and fire and brimstone devoured the place, so shall it also be in those days.

When Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, he will have no opposition to fear. He can go about without hindrance. As compared with a prisoner secured in prison and bonds, though he is sometimes permitted to go out of his prison, still he cannot lay aside the shame and bonds of his imprisonment, and he dare not enact his former evil deeds, whether murder or theft, etc., because aside from his bonds he is accompanied by armed soldiers who protect all the subjects and citizens of the great kingdom and prevent the prisoner from venting his rage upon them. As soon, however, as a prisoner is released from his bonds and given his freedom, he need not care for the shame of imprisonment, but goes out openly to work and make gain for himself. This time in which Satan is loosed from his imprisonment is, without doubt, the time in which the witnesses of God are lying dead in the street (Rev. 11), and I believe I am not in error that this is also the time in which the woman clothed with the sun fled to her place in the wilderness, a time and times and half time, or three and a half days.

Now Satan, as an imprisoned transgressor, dare not any more appear in his natural wolflike character and cause the people to fear, but he comes as lord of the world and offers all the things of this world through which he is permitted to announce himself and says, "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." And in the longing desires of the natural man he turns away from the cross of Christ and is pleased to serve his own lusts rather than God (Phil. 3), explaining that the bodies of the witnesses of God are not laid into graves as the means of eternal joy. And this through the dead letter or

the letter which killeth, a great work is carried on which seems very similar to that which was foretold by the witnesses of God during the one thousand years. This is confirmed by all the prophets and by the gospel, when it is said with other things, "This people draweth near to me with their lips and honoreth me, but their heart is far from me" (Isa. 29:13; 6:10). And especially through the flying roll does God make known figuratively this time of which we speak, and showed the Prophet Zechariah what it signified. God spake to him and said; "What seest thou?" In answer to these words the prophet said, "I see a flying letter, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide." He received this explanation, "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it" (Zech. 5:2, 3).

Christ the Lord himself shows us again and again that the last time before his second coming will be a time in which no one will be able to work any more (John 9:4), in which indeed the gospel will be preached in the whole world—but understand, as a dead letter for a witness, only in accordance with Matth. 24:14). And thus this time may rightly be compared to the time of Noah before the flood, as also to the time spoken of by the prophet, when the witnesses of God lay dead on the streets, when high living and the giving of gifts one to another seemed to be the chief work of men. The Apostle Paul also confirms this time as a peaceful time after the flesh and says, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then shall sudden destruction come upon them" (1 Thess. 5:3; 2 Thess. 2).

In reference to the falling away referred to above, how can there be a falling away where the prophecies of the living witnesses of God have never been heard, for there is nothing besides God and his word from which man can

fall away and then after that shall come he that is to come to terrify the earth (Isa. 2:10-21).

The Spirit, in the book of the Revelations of John, bears testimony repeatedly of this time, and in harmony with what is said about it by others, and to the angel of the church of Laodicea this lukewarmness was rebuked and declared as displeasing to God, but according to the letter it is spoken of as a time of wealth and pleasure. "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17).

In the opening of the sixth seal there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell to the earth (Rev. 6:12, 13).

We may readily understand that the time in which this great earthquake (which signifies the changes in the political world) took place is to be a time of continued liberty, favorable to the enemy of souls, to be loosed in that time from his imprisonment; and also that this time of liberty will continue in the world until the second advent of Christ. This is shown by the anxious calling of the earthly kings and great rulers and rich men (Rev. 18), and the same is confirmed by the sounding of the trumpet of the sixth angel (Rev. 9).

Now at this time the four angels that were bound in the great River Euphrates, which were prepared to kill, were loosed. Their power, however, was in their mouths (Rev. 9:14-16), and from them issued fire and smoke and brimstone; and through this consuming power of the fire the wrath of God was manifested upon the earth, upon all unregenerated, unbelieving, dead people; and Satan, now loosed from his chains, sent out his servants to the kings of the earth and to all the world, to gather to the conflict on the great day of God the Almighty. This is now the

time in which the witnesses of God will again arise to their feet, and after their reception in heaven they will judge by the word of God, first spoken by the angels, but in the last days by the word spoken through his Son (Jesus).

That the three spirits (Chap. 16) are false teachers, the 14th verse clearly shows, for it is said: "And they are spirits of the devil." These do wonders—but, alas, what a pity! Oh, the everlasting regret—to all those who have rejected the word of God and who are now also to be rejected of Christ. And though they may claim to have prophesied in the name of Jesus and to have eaten and drunken in his presence and say, "Thou hast taught us on our streets"—it is written, "And he shall say, I say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Luke 13:27).

I have now briefly shown the character of this glorious kingdom of Christ upon earth and also the types and shadows and parables, setting forth and establishing this kingdom both in the Old and New Testaments, and explaining and harmonizing them in their true signification, and I will also here try, in accordance with the word of God, to show the beginning of this kingdom, inasmuch as many of the interpreters and expositors of the prophecies of God are still looking for it in the future. God grant that it may appear to every reader as clear and plain as it is in my own heart. Oh! that I might be able to paint it as upon a tablet, as Habakuk was commanded, that it could be read, and I say, that it might be understood also by him even that runneth (Hab. 2:2).

The first prophecies that testify to the beginning of this kingdom are the declarations of the Patriarch Jacob to his son Judah, saying: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10).



That this Shiloh, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Bruiser of the serpent's head, did come just as the sceptre had departed from Judah, hardly needs an explanation, for it is a word or fact that is almost universally known (and acknowledged\*). The Jews were under the dominion of Rome, required to pay tribute or taxes to them and were compelled to acknowledge them as their sovereign and bow to the Roman power and authority, which, before this, they had never done. Besides through all the overturnings of the great monarchs, as those of Babylon, Persia and Greece, the sceptre or power of Judah was never taken away, as the history of the Maccabees distinctly shows, and as both church and secular history relates in detail.

But, as above intimated, as the Jewish sceptre was broken by the Romans and had departed from the Jewish people, all pious believers perceive that the time was now fulfilled and that the King of the Jews must now be born (Luke 2:25, 38).

This is confirmed by Daniel in his prophecy of the seventy weeks (Dan. 9), after the expiration of which Christ should come as a Prince or King. These seventy weeks, calculated as year-weeks, that is, each day taken as a year, make up the time of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Four hundred and ninety years after the prophecy of Daniel, Christ was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the reign of Caesar Augustus of Rome, who reigned, with the rest of the then known world, also over the land of Judea.

That this imperishable kingdom should be established at the time of these temporal kingdoms, Daniel showed King Nebuchadnezzar in his explanation of the king's dream. He (Daniel) also shows the continuation of this kingdom to be established of God, namely: It shall never be destroyed, it shall never be left to any other people, and it shall stand forever (Dan. 2:44).

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\*) Translator.

Consequently, in the days of Caesar Augustus, in the twenty-fifth year of his reign and in the last century of the full, round number of 4,000 years after the creation of the world, this imperishable kingdom was established—a kingdom, the value and endurance of which was confirmed by many, especially by the angels on the fields of Bethlehem. This was likewise confirmed by the angel at the annunciation to Mary, when he said, "And he (this King) shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33).

Hence I desire, with all the chosen ones of God and especially with King David, to sing a beautiful song concerning this new King: "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee forever. . . . Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre; thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore, God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Psa. 45:2-7). Kindly read this entire Psalm and compare the loving conversation of King Solomon in Canticles or his Song of Songs, between the Bridegroom (that is, Christ, the King) and his bride (that is, the kingdom of Christ, the Holy City, the church of Christ upon earth). It would seem impossible that any one should yet hope for a time, a free, natural time of peace, in which in joyfulness for a thousand years there should exist only a life of earthly pleasure and enjoyment, as many understand Isaiah 65—a time in which no one will "labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble," etc. But, dear reader, I say in the direct words of the Savior, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Matth. 22:29); and consequently they will also not bring forth.

Therefore, O ye beloved, those to whom the word of God is precious and who have a sincere desire to search therein, and who have not only a desire to search therein

but also to understand the same, let us examine the signs of the times; for this purpose the word of God was given us that we should search in it and also learn to understand and explain the prophecies, for the time is at hand.

This prophecy is not sealed or hidden; but is given of God through Jesus Christ to show to his servants what shall shortly take place.

Therefore I believe that every one will also believe with me that by this kingdom is meant a spiritual kingdom on earth, to which all those who awake from the spiritual life of sin and who have spiritually arisen from the dead, are invited, so that they may live and reign with Christ in this spiritual life a thousand years.

Whether exactly a thousand years according to our reckoning of time are meant, I do not know that our purpose demands of us to decide; if so, it would no doubt have been given us also to know the day and hour; but this is not so intended (Matth. 24:36). But that it is one and the same time, namely, these one thousand years, and the twelve hundred and sixty days in which the witnesses of God prophesy and during the same time the woman was supported in the wilderness, and the forty-two months in which the church of God shall be trampled by the heathen, is, without any doubt, according to my understanding, a distinct testimony of the prophecy of all the prophets and all have reference to the same time.

Let us, however, well compare the 45th Psalm above referred to and the entire loving conversation of the King of Salem or the Bridegroom with his beloved queen, bride or city of God, described in this Song of Songs, and the prophecies of the suffering and death of Jesus, and I hope you will soon find that this glory may be a spiritual communion with Christ; for Solomon also here and there shows how poor and despised the bride of Christ is. In chapter I verse 5 he says, "I am black, but comely. . . . Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun has

looked upon me. My mother's children were angry with me" (Song of S. 1:5, 6). "Oh, my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rocks, and in the secret places of the stairs" (Song of S. 2:14).

Indeed, thus despised is the bride of Christ, together with her Bridegroom, everywhere described to us in their natural appearance; especially does the prophet Isaiah set forth the personal appearance of the Savior when he says (Isa. 53), "He hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him, and we hid as it were our faces from him." But again it is said (verse 11), "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. . . . Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Isa. 53:11, 12). This is He that teacheth righteousness and is mighty to save, whose garments were dyed with blood and his name is called The Word of God (Rev. 14).

This is the spiritual marriage which amidst all the confusion of the wicked world had its beginning in the dark stable at Bethlehem, and at the feast of Pentecost at Jerusalem ten days after Christ had ascended to heaven was fully consummated. The Prophet Hosea says, "I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies" (Hos. 2:19).

This was the beginning of this glorious kingdom of Christ upon earth so often spoken of in the word of God.

Now the Lamb that was slain, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root and Offspring of David had overcome and taken the sealed book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne and opened it and broken the seven seals, and with the opening of the first seal he showed forth the glory of the kingdom and restored that which had been lost through Adams transgression or through the fall; for now all those who would overcome should be permitted to eat



of the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7; 6:2).

This glory of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, which exists in spirit and in truth, was made known unto men as the glory of the only begotten Son of God and prophetically shown or declared by the white horse, and He that sat thereon who had a bow and to whom was given a crown, and who went forth to conquer and who was victorious. And thus was restored the privilege to eat of the tree of life.

Also the Babylonian confusion was, in truth and in essence, again manifested, as on the day of Pentecost all who were gathered together with the disciples began to speak with other tongues, so that the assembled multitude was amazed in consternation, and in astonishment cried out, "Are not all these which speak Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?"

In the opening of this first seal the glory of God in its full measure was made manifest to the believers, the regenerated and unto those who had been spiritually resurrected, and this had also before been, and of this the angels knew at the time of the birth of the great King, for which reason they also desired to look into the great mystery of God which he now was about to bestow upon the children of men, over which, in great rejoicing, they broke out in harmonious melody upon the fields of Bethlehem, saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to man. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

Thus was the King of heaven born poor and hidden (as it were) from the boasting, noisy world in a lowly condition. But notwithstanding his birth was gloriously celebrated, much more so than the birth of any earthly prince or heir to a worldly throne ever was or ever can be. Not only did the humble shepherds rejoice because of the message brought them by the angels and praised God for it,

but also princes from the distant East came and made known the mystery of the birth of the great King of kings, whose kingdom was to be an everlasting kingdom and whose dominion was to extend from sea to sea over all the earth.

In the natural appearance, however, he was the most despised of all; he was hated by both Jews and Gentiles, and his disciples (the citizens of his kingdom) had only bonds and tribulation awaiting them. The prophet indicates the reign of the King of the Jews when he says (Isa. 9:6), "And the government shall be upon his shoulders."

On the other hand, when we look upon the kingdoms of this world, the greater the authority the more honor and service the potentate or sovereign may command. In this kingdom of our Lord, however, the power and authority of the Ruler becomes great through suffering, patience and by enduring the offenses and evil entreatings of men. For this reason also the early Christians praised God when they were accounted worthy for Christ's sake to suffer reproach (Acts 5). For thus the great King commanded his followers to rejoice when men should reproach and persecute them, and speak all manner of evil against them falsely for his sake (Matth. 5). In this manner also the apostles, as its first counsellors, ruled this kingdom in lowliness and did not ask others to serve them, but they themselves, at all times, served and recognized that God had placed them as the very lowest, as it were, appointed unto death (1 Cor. 4). "For we are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, . . . even to this present hour; we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place, and labor working with our own hands. We are continually as a curse of the world and as the offscouring of all men." Therefore the apostle admonishes and says, "Be ye followers of me." "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." So also the wisdom of the rulers of this kingdom does not regard temporal or natural things, for it is said, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise" (1 Cor. 3:18). By the above, however, we do not wish to convey the idea of ignorance, or that ignorance with

those having the spiritual life and ruling in the spiritual kingdom were a common thing, for the apostle says (1 Cor. 2), "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to naught, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom of God, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; a wisdom which tastes and realizes that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for those that love him."

That this is the kingdom which God would establish while yet the temporal kingdoms spoken of (namely Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome) existed, can here be shown or proved in few words; for he says not, "Before or after these kingdoms," but "In the days of these kings" or kingdoms (Dan. 2:44). And that it is the kingdom in which those who arose in the first resurrection live and reign with Christ is shown by the stone which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2).

This will be sufficient as proof of the beginning of this kingdom, and I hope that the Christian reader will agree herewith and believe the testimonies which we have adduced on this subject from the scriptures, which clearly sets aside all hope of a temporal or Jewish kingdom; and with these I will close this part of the discussion, but will take into further consideration other parts of the text.

**"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).**

That the regenerated and those who have spiritually risen shall participate in the judgment, is shown in the answer of Christ to Peter, in which Jesus said, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matth. 19:28).

Again, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas. . . . The queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this regeneration and condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here" (Matth. 12:41, 42).

The Apostle Paul also testifies, saying, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2).

Judgment, according to the word of God, is mercy and the most weighty (important) in the law (Matth. 23:23), and is imposed on the believers as the greatest command, and this in the Old as well as in the New Testament. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah (more than others), laid before his people with special stress the importance of judgment and said, "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts. . . . Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and with a perfect heart; and what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in your cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they transgress not against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you: this do and ye shall not trespass" (2 Chron. 19:6-10). The judgment of mercy or merciful judgment was also given to the church of God of the New Testament and was an especial command to Peter, and with him to all Christians, for it is said, "But what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch."

It was the key of the kingdom of heaven that was given to Peter and to all the regenerated in accordance with which all things in his church on earth shall be bound or loosed, even as they shall be found bound or loosed in heaven, which judgment likewise will not be held for men (that is, to please men), but for God (that is, to please God). This judgment is given to those who are risen (from the death of sin) and to all the regenerated who now, like the scribes and Pharisees in former times, sit in Moses' seat, when there are things to be judged between brother and brother, and according to the teaching of Paul (1 Cor. 6).



This includes judgment upon all dealings in temporal things, "for if the world shall be judged by you, how much more things that pertain to this life?"—all of which, to a certain extent, also affect our spiritual life. These who have spiritually arisen are they who constitute the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, who now instead of the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat and judge these things; and because they in all things judge themselves they need not be judged by others (1 Cor. 11:30). When any one through weakness commits a sin, he has an advocate before the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous. When, however, any one commits a sin with better knowledge and wantonly, he will be judged by all and saved by fear, so that he may not be condemned with the world (Jude 23).

Of this nature is judgment, and mercy is the most weighty and important in the law, which, however, must not be overlooked. In this manner the believers will judge all things spiritually and will not by any one be judged (1 Cor. 2).

The word, however, which they have declared here on earth as the testimony of God unto men, this will then judge the whole world in righteousness, and as all faithful ministers of the gospel have preached the word of truth and faith in Christ, so will God then hold up before all men faith, yea, the same faith comprehended in his word and which was preached to them, and judge them in accordance therewith in the day of judgment.

This judgment of God, the overabundant mercy of God—which may justly be called the restoration of all things, the grace of God which bringeth salvation, which has appeared to all men—is confirmed and established in the command of Jesus to Peter, and at the same time to all the flock entrusted to his care, in the words: "Feed my lambs!" "Feed my sheep!"

This was the key to the kingdom of heaven with which all things on earth were to be bound or loosed, and this alone in accordance with the word of God and in accordance with the scriptures, in the books which were given us as the rule in these things. These books were already seen by Daniel in the vision shown him, and how they were opened (Dan. 7:10). This great book which was closed and sealed with seven seals, which neither man nor angel

could open and which contained the hidden counsel of God, which could not be read as long as the veil hung over it (2 Cor. 3), in which were hidden the words of God until the last times (Dan. 12)—this great book was opened by the death of Jesus. This veil or covering typified the veil of the temple which closed the entrance into the holy of holies, but now when Jesus died was rent from the top to the bottom, so that every one would be permitted to enter and eat of the tree of life, that is, in the Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7).

The souls who through the spiritual resurrection had risen from the dead, were they who now seated themselves in Moses' seat. Many of these were beheaded for the word of God and for the testimony which they held, and had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not taken upon their foreheads nor upon their hands the mark of the beast, and this was the judgment that was given them, namely: That all who had not worshipped the image, but had been regenerated and loosed with the key of the kingdom of heaven, and showed that their conversation was in heaven, from whence also they looked for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ—these are they who shall sit in Moses' seat and judge the world, and these constitute the kingdom of righteousness, the kingdom of peace, the Millennium (Phil. 3:20).

Those who, on the contrary, do not believe in the word and walk according to the flesh after the lusts of their hearts, and who worship the beast and take upon themselves the mark of the beast, these will be judged by the binding key and excluded from the camp of Zion; and these shall also be bound in heaven in accordance with the words of Jesus (Matth. 18). Those, however, who in this day of grace will come to the knowledge of the truth and realize the virtue of this correction, and comprehend the meaning of being given over unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, their spirits shall be saved in the day of the Lord. As long as this judgment of mercy is maintained in the church of Christ, so long the unconquerable King reigns in his city of peace, and all the citizens of the city or kingdom reign with him and live in blessed rest, even as it was in the days of the natural King Solomon, when peace and quietude were predominant.

When, however, Satan for a little time shall be loosed and released from his prison, then will this judgment with the key of heaven be administered very differently. The man of sin, the beast out of the pit, the son of perdition will administer this judgment after the manner of men in terrible form. The curse of the judgment of condemnation will let the beams of the bann with the power given it by the key of heaven, thunder over all that have not taken upon themselves the mark of the beast and especially those who believe the testimony of the two witnesses. Satan will succeed in killing the two witnesses and in drowning the woman with a great stream of water cast forth out of his mouth; a flood of water, of numberless self-chosen laws, sects and commandments, which were strong enough to wash away the entire church of God from the earth; but the earth helped the woman and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood. That is, the kings of the earth contracted the power of the pope and limited his power, both in multiplying the number of convents and the shameful wickedness associated with them, under the semblance of righteousness, and also in the absolution deals and the pilgrimages so detrimental to the state.

And thus the woman (the church) remained in the wilderness, while Satan went out into all the world, and the great stream Euphrates dried up, and all the nations were gathered together to a great conflict on the great day of the Lord. The cursings of the bann of the pope ceased and the ten kings (Rev. 17:16) made him desolate and naked, hated him and consumed his flesh, i. e., that is, took from him the possessions belonging to him.

But Satan outwitted his opponents and clothed himself with the letter of the word, and then as an angel of light gained much more for himself, and went out to gather for the great day of the Lord. Now he assumed to know nothing of judgment and spoke positively, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. Condemn not, so shall ye not be condemned" (Matth. 7). Likewise the judgment given to the saints he explained as an absurd silliness not commanded to any one. In consequence of this, the conflict ceased and all was deferred until the great day of the Lord. The witnesses of God, he two witnesses, which were the two Testaments, were now killed, and what had been accomplished

by them in stirring up the consciences of men was again quieted and the troubled hearts were quieted and joy took its place. A voluptuous life and the giving of presents became the unhindered chief work of the people. Satan would have taken pleasure in making sport of eternity, and making men believe that hell was only a fable, if his torturing conscience would not continually have reminded him of the coming wrath of God. Hence, also, faith in Christ and in God were not rejected, if only, though through fear and trembling, the glory of God could be changed into an image or an imaginary Christianity (Rom. 1:13), and the creature worshipped more than the Creator.

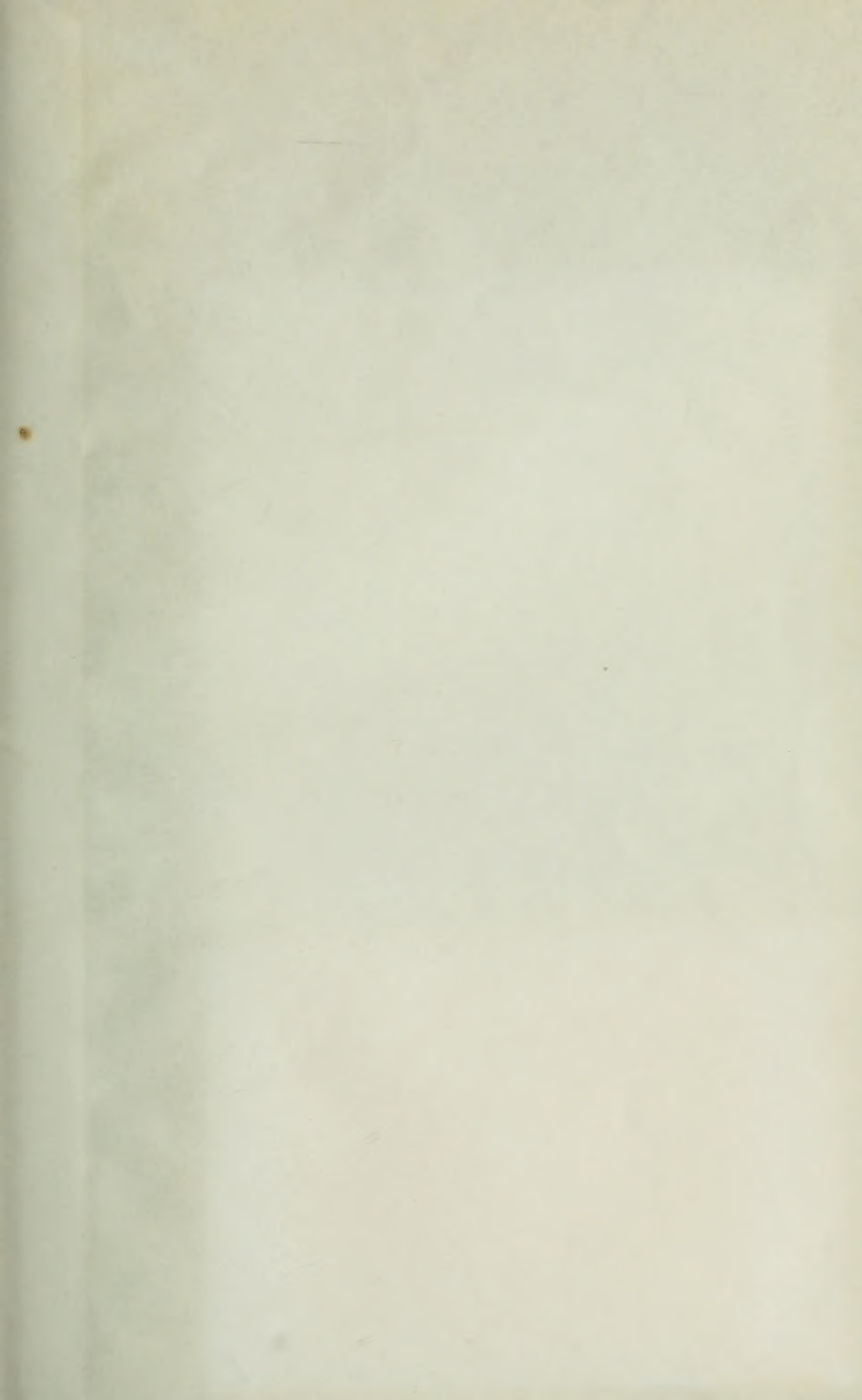
That God is, is not so readily denied, and also faith in Jesus is commended, but with their works men do deny the faith. The highly enlightened false philosophy of men has so robbed mankind and misrepresented the end and purpose of life that men are indeed led to believe that godliness is a business or trade (1 Tim. 6). In humility and the spirituality of angels, men go about with carnal minds and carnal purposes, vainly puffed up in their fleshy minds (Col. 2:13). Men for conscience sake refrain from eating or drinking or from working on certain days, etc. All these and many other like things are signs of the times, which Jesus commanded his disciples to observe (Luke 12:56).

From all these things we may conclude that the end is nigh at the door and that the prophecies are fulfilled. It is midnight and who knows how soon the seventh angel will sound and call out, "The Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

For each individual, however, the time is fulfilled when it is said, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." Therefore watch and pray, for no one knows in which hour the Lord will come. No doubt he will come in the night when all are asleep and no one thinks of his coming. Blessed is that servant who watches and who governs well his house and provides for it; who has not hid his pound in a napkin, and who from the heart forgives his brother, for it is said, "He will gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and he will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37).

THE END.







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